

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 008513
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PA-02 PRS-01
USIE-00 /029 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:PWLANDE:EI
APPROVED BY NEA/INS:PWLANDE
-----129985 121742Z /44
O 121701Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, IN

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BY ART BUCHWALD

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN ART BUCHWALD'S COLUMN IN
JANUARY 12 WASHINGTON POST:

BEGIN QUOTE:

WHILE ON HIS RECENT TRIP, PRESIDENT CARTER WAS OVERHEARD ON
A LIVE TV MICROPHONE TELLING SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE
THAT WHEN THEY GOT BACK HOME THEY WOULD WRITE A BLUNT LETTER
TO PRIME MINISTER DESAI OF INDIA TELLING HIM EXACTLY WHAT
THEY THOUGHT OF INDIA'S STAND ON ATOMIC ENERGY.

THE QUESTION YOU'RE PROBABLY ASKING IS: WHO WRITES BLUNT
NOTES AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT?

THE ANSWER IS A MAN NAMED ARNOLD BLUNT. HE HAS BEEN
STRUGGLING WITH THE CARTER REQUEST FOR MORE THAN A WEEK
NOW AND HE WAS VERY DISTURBED WHEN I WALKED INTO HIS OFFICE
AND INTERRUPTED HIS WORK.

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"THIS IS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST BLUNT LETTERS I'VE EVER HAD TO
WRITE," BLUNT TOLD ME.

"WHAT MAKES IT TOUGHER THAN A BLUNT NOTE TO THE SOVIET
UNION?"

"INDIA IS A THIRD WORLD POWER, AND THEY'RE VERY TOUCHY.

IT'S TAKEN SEVERAL YEARS TO GET OVER THEIR HURT WHEN WE
TILTED TOWARD PAKISTAN, AND WE'D LIKE TO KEEP GOOD RE-
LATIONS WITH THEM IF WE POSSIBLY CAN. SO WE HAVE TO MAKE
THE LETTER BLUNT BUT YET NOT HIT THEM OVER THE HEAD."

"THAT DOES POSE A PROBLEM."

"THE WHITE HOUSE HAS REJECTED SEVERAL DRAFTS OF BLUNT NOTES
I'VE SENT OVER THERE."

"CAN I SEE THEM?"

"WELL, THE FIRST I STOLE FROM THE BLUNT NOTE JERRY FORD SENT
NEW YORK." HE SHOWED IT TO ME. ALL IT SAID WAS "CARTER TO
INDIA: 'DROP DEAD'"

"THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT IT WAS TOO BRIEF?" I ASKED.

"HE FELT IT DIDN'T EXPLAIN WHY WE WERE BEING SO BLUNT AFTER
THE WAY HE WAS ENTERTAINED." ARNOLD HANDED ME ANOTHER
DRAFT. "I THOUGHT THIS ONE WAS PRETTY GOOD, BUT THEY ALSO
MIXED IT.

"IT READ, 'MRS. CARTER AND I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR
ALL THE KINDNESS YOU SHOWED US ON OUR RECENT TRIP TO YOUR
BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. IT WAS PERFECT IN EVERY WAY EXCEPT
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THAT I'VE ADVISED EVERYONE IN MY ADMINISTRATION NOT TO
DRINK YOUR HEAVY WATER'."

"THAT SEEMS PRETTY GOOD. IT CERTAINLY MAKES THE PRESI-
DENT'S POINT."

"I THOUGHT SO, TOO, BUT THEY WANT SOMETHING FRIENDLIER AND
AT THE SAME TIME MORE BLUNT. THIS IS THE THIRD DRAFT I
DID.

"IT BEGAN, 'DEAR PRIME MINISTER DESAI: THIS IS JUST A
SHORT NOTE TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH MY ENTIRE PARTY ENJOYED
OUR STAY IN INDIA. I AM DELIGHTED WITH OUR AGREEMENT ON
HUMAN RIGHTS, HOPES FOR MORE TRADE BETWEEN OUR TWO
COUNTRIES AND YOUR DESIRE TO BACK ME IN MY SOLUTION TO THE
MIDDLE EAST CRISIS.

"BUT YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR COTTON-PICKIN' MIND IF YOU THINK
WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU ATOMIC REACTORS FOR ENERGY WITHOUT

SAFEGUARDS. WE'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH INDIA TRYING TO
BECOME AN ATOMIC POWER, AND IF YOU USE ONE OUNCE OF OUR

PLUTONIUM FOR A BOMB OR A MISSILE, WE'LL DEFOLIATE THE
ENTIRE VALE OF KASHMIR'."

"THE WHITE HOUSE DIDN'T LIKE THAT ONE?" I ASKED BLUNT.

"THEY SAID IT SOUNDED TOO MUCH LIKE NIXON."

"YOU'RE REALLY UP A TREE," I SAID.

"I THINK THE ONE I'M WORKING ON NOW MIGHT DO IT. LISTEN
TO THIS: "DEAR PRIME MINISTER DESAI: I WISH TO THANK
YOU FOR THE SARI YOU GAVE MY WIFE AND THE ELEPHANT TUSK
YOU GAVE ME. WE REALLY ENJOYED OUR GIFTS. UNDER SEPARATE
COVER I AM SENDING YOU A COMPLETE WESTINGHOUSE ATOMIC
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ENERGY PLANT. THE INSTRUCTIONS WITH IT WERE WRITTEN BY
MY POLISH TRANSLATER, AND I'M SURE YOU WON'T HAVE ANY
TROUBLE PUTTING IT TOGETHER. IF YOU DO, JUST CALL MY
BROTHER BILLY. HE HAS SPENT HIS LIFETIME IN THE ATOMIC
ENERGY BUSINESS AND HE WILL BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING
THAT YOUR SCIENTISTS DON'T UNDERSTAND. WISHING YOU THE
BEST OF HEALTH. JIMMY CARTER'."

"BY HEAVEN," I TOLD BLUNT, "I THINK YOU'VE GOT IT."
END QUOTE.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, JOURNALISTS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE008513
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PWLANDE:EI
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780018-0842
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780171/aaaachyk.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0d2f8be4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3786969
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BY ART BUCHWALD THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN ART BUCHWALD'S COLUMN IN JANUARY 12 WASHINGTON POST
TAGS: SOPN, IN, (CARTER, JIMMY), (BUCHWALD, ART)
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0d2f8be4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014